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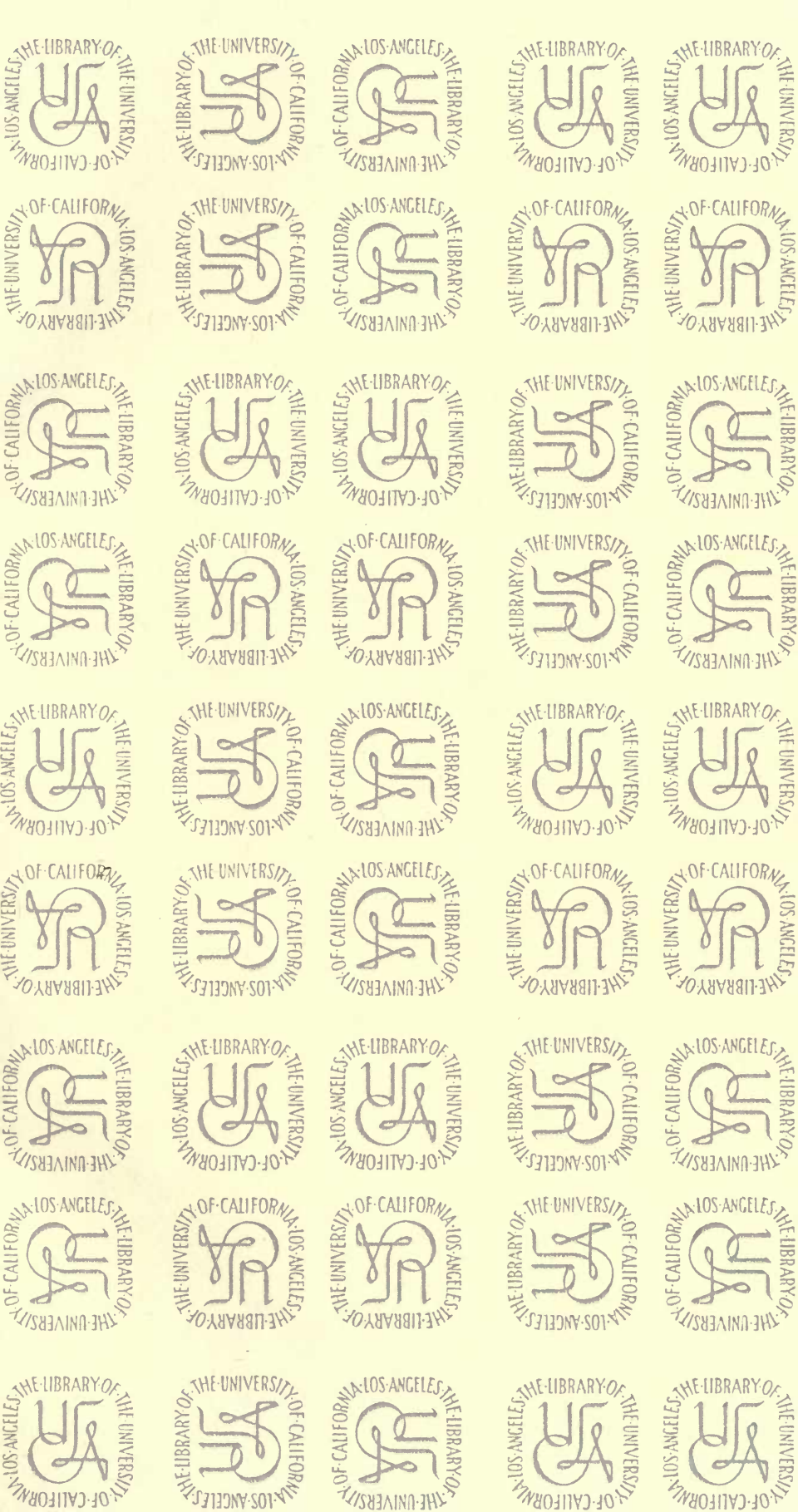
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NEW HAVEN IN 1784.

A PAPER

READ BEFORE THE NEW HAVEN COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
JANUARY 21, 1884,

BY

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NEW HAVEN IN 1784.

ON the evening of January 21, 1784, the President of Yale College wrote in his diary : " This afternoon the Bill or Charter of the City of New Haven passed the Governor and Council, and completes the incorporation of the Mayor, four Aldermen and twenty Common Council." It is fitting to recall on this anniversary some characteristics of the New Haven of 1784.

The town then covered the territory now occupied, not only by the present town, but also by West Haven, East Haven, North Haven, (the greater part of) Woodbridge, Hamden, and Bethany, in all an area of perhaps ten by thirteen miles, or from ten to twelve times as extensive as now.

The inhabitants were estimated at 7,960 souls ; of whom 3,350, less than almost any one of our wards to-day, were in that part which was chartered as a city. There are now within the town-limits of 1784, by a more than tenfold increase, some 87,000 inhabitants, while the city proper has multiplied more than twentyfold.

In the settled part of the city (that is, the original nine squares, called " the town-plat," and the south-eastward extension to the water, known as " the new township"), there were some 400 dwellings, mostly of wood, but a good number of brick, and one or two of stone. A nearly contemporaneous map (1775) on our walls shows that these dwellings lay almost wholly in the area bounded by Meadow, George, York, Grove,

Olive and Water streets,—the northern part of this area being by far the least fully inhabited.

The streets were without regular lines of trees, without pavements, sidewalks, or names; but it was an awkward mode of designation by localities identified with personal names (as we still speak of Cutler Corner); and eight months after the charter was given, 21 of the principal streets (Broadway, Chapel, Cherry, Church, College, Court, Crown, Elm, Fair, Fleet, George, Grove, High, Meadow, Olive, Orange, State, Temple, Union, Water, and York) received at a city meeting their present names. A few may have been already known by these titles; I dare not affirm it of any but College and Chapel streets, in both which cases the names were applied only to the immediate vicinity of the two college buildings which occasioned them. A few more had been known by other names: thus, the lower part of Church street was called Market street, from the market-house at the open intersection of George and Church; State street is called on the map of 1775 Queen street, a designation which would seem to go back to distant Queen Anne; part of George street was long known as Leather lane; York street was sometimes called West street, and Grove street North street.

Of the new names Church street was suggested by the Episcopal Church which stood on the east side of that street, a little nearer to Chapel than to Center street; Temple street, from the two churches on the Green, in front of which it ran; York street, from the name of the "Yorkshire quarter," given at the very beginning to that neighborhood where some leading immigrants from Yorkshire sat down; Elm street from the already patriarchal trees planted in 1686 in front of the Rev. Mr. Pierpont's dwelling and remaining almost to our day; and Court street, because it was intended that it should run across the Green past the Court House.

New Haven had already been described in print (Peters' History of Connecticut) as "the most beautiful town in New England"; and one special feature which contributed to this impression was the Green, usually called the market place, because the southern border was used for this purpose. Dr. Jedidiah Morse, however, states in the first edition of his American Geography (1789) that "the beauty of the public square is greatly diminished by the burial ground and several of the public buildings which occupy a considerable part of it."

Chief among these buildings was an elegant and commodious brick State House or County Court House, built in 1761-64 by the State and County jointly, and standing a little to the north of, and much nearer Temple street than the present Trinity church; it had both east and west doors, furnished with stone steps; the first floor was devoted to court rooms and offices, and the second to the use of the two houses of the General Assembly at its October sessions, while the third floor was an open hall. The judge of the County Court was Col. James Wadsworth, a graduate at Yale in 1748, of whose college days an interesting reminiscence is preserved in the plan which he drew of New Haven in his senior year and which was engraved in 1806.

Next to this building stood what was still the "New Brick" meeting-house of the First Church, built in 1753-57, measuring about seventy-five by fifty feet, and holding an average congregation of not much over nine hundred persons; it was on the site of the present Center Church, and was arranged internally in a corresponding way, with the pulpit toward the west, but it was as if the church now standing were shifted around sidewise, the north and south length being the greatest, and the bell-tower at the northern end. The minister was the Rev. Chauncey Whittelsey, now near the end of his life,

having reached the age of sixty-six, and having been settled for thirty-six years.

The earliest secession or separation from the common church of the whole town had been the society formed in consequence of the Whitefieldian revival, and after a long struggle finally recognized by authority of the General Assembly in 1759, and dubbed with the unaccountable name of the White Haven Society.* Their wooden meeting-house, built in 1744 and much enlarged in 1764, measuring about sixty feet square, and called from its color the Blue Meeting-house, stood on the southeast corner of Elm and Church streets. The congregation worshipping there had dwindled from a much larger number than that of the parent society, to less than eight hundred hearers, under the dry preaching of that acute metaphysician, Jonathan Edwards, the younger, now aged thirty-nine, and for fifteen years their pastor.

The majority of those who had left Mr. Edwards's meeting, as much from dislike of his extreme "New Divinity" views as from his dull preaching, had formed a new congregation, called the Fair Haven Society, now the largest in town, or about one thousand persons, who worshiped in a house the size of the "New Brick," built of wood, in 1770, on the site of the present church of the United Society. Their minister was Mr. Allyn Mather, a young man of thirty-six, now in feeble health, and among the congregation was the Rev. Samuel Bird, Mr. Edwards's predecessor, and Mr. Mather's frequent substitute in the pulpit; both of them died within the year. It is one of the curious felicities of history that not only have these two divergent offshoots from the old First Church long ago come together in the United Society, but now they are preparing to absorb also another organization (the

* May this name have been given with a covert reference to Whitefield?

Third Church) which represented in its origin an opposite extreme of theological belief.

The great majority of New Haven in 1784 was thus of one religious faith. But besides these societies of the Congregational order there was a small Episcopal society, not numbering much over two hundred members, which occupied what was distinctively known as "The Church," built in 1754-55, on Church Street, with the Rev. Bela Hubbard as rector, now forty-four years of age, and having been here for fourteen years; this was the smallest in size of any of the church buildings mentioned, somewhat less than sixty by forty feet.

Besides the Episcopalians there was a handful of Sandemanians, the most radical of "New-Light" sects, too much so for even Mr. Edwards to tolerate, who had held separate services for a dozen years or more; for a time they had had two elders or ministers in charge of their simple worship, but these leaders had sympathized (as did others of the flock) too plainly with Tory principles to remain here in the Revolution; and the remnant that was left had dwindled into insignificance. There were also one or two Jewish families, the first of which appeared here in 1772.

I have mentioned the chief buildings on the Green. There was, besides, a wooden jail, on College Street, built in 1735, with Stephen Munson, a college graduate, for jailor; but this dilapidated structure was replaced, late in the year 1784, by a new jail, built just across the street, under the eaves of the college. Adjacent to the jail on the south was the old County Court House, the upper floor of which had been used also as a State House for many years before the new one was built; in this building, or in a separate building near it, the Hopkins Grammar School, which was now in a very low condition, was kept by Mr. Richard Woodhull, a middle-aged man, of competent learning, whose career as a college tutor had been inter-

rupted many years before by his conversion to Sandemanianism, and whose attitude in the Revolution as a non-resistant and loyalist had interfered still further with his prospects. Besides this, there was a brick school-house on the Elm street side of the Green, north of and older than the Fair Haven meeting-house, and here youth of both sexes were taught.

Occupying a good part of the upper Green, which then sloped much more than now from west to east, on the sides and at the back of the Brick meeting-house, was the ancient burial-ground, of irregular shape, which had lately been inclosed by a rough board fence. This was, I suppose, the only fence on or about the whole Green, the rest being entirely open to the surrounding streets, and the more level lower Green especially being a common thoroughfare for all sorts of travel.

Two hundred and fifty buttonwood and elm trees, set out in 1759 around the Green, were now half grown; of these I take it that the solitary buttonwood, still standing opposite the First Methodist Church, is a survivor; the veteran elm at the southeast corner of the Green may be older, and a few others of our oldest elms may be relics of this planting. On the Green itself no trees were standing; but a single row of elms was placed, a year or two later, on the line of Temple street, in front of the State House and the churches.

Next in interest to the Green was the College which fronted upon it. The building originally named Yale College, which had stood in the front corner of the yard, had recently been torn down; and the three buildings which in 1784 represented the College are all now standing, though greatly transformed. The oldest, Connecticut Hall, or South Middle, built in 1750-51, instead of being the four-storied structure which it is to-day, had but three stories with a gambrel roof, and lodged about one-third of the students; what is now the Athenæum,

built in 1761-63, was of three stories, with steeple and bell, and contained the chapel, library, and apparatus-room; and in the rear was the new dining-hall, built in 1782, later the chemical laboratory. Besides these there were the President's house, built of wood in 1722, and an elegant mansion for that date, standing a little north of the present College street Church; and the Professor of Divinity's house, also belonging to the College, on York street, on the ground now appropriated to the Medical School.

The President was Dr. Ezra Stiles, one of the most learned Americans of his generation, now 56 years of age, having been six years in office; while the Professor of Divinity, or College pastor, and at the same time lecturer on theological topics, was the Rev. Samuel Wales, a young man of 36, installed only two years before, and now at the height of his usefulness, his remarkable power as a preacher as yet unaffected by the insidious disease which soon ended his career.

There were enrolled as students during the current term (Nov. 12-Jan. 13), the first term of the College year, 260 undergraduates, twenty-five per cent. more than in any other American college; but the great irregularity of attendance which was then common reduced the number actually present to less than 225. The Junior class was instructed by Tutor Josiah Meigs, and the Sophomores by Tutor Matthew Talcott Russell, while the Freshman class was so unusually large as to be divided under the care of the two youngest tutors, Simeon Baldwin and Henry Channing. The other officers were, James Hillhouse, a young lawyer, treasurer, and Jeremiah Atwater, steward.

I have thus named all that can be called public buildings in the town; certainly there was no bank,—that luxury did not come till 1792; no post-office,—the infrequent mails were handled in a corner of a small country-store; no almshouse,—

for was it not voted, at the town-meeting in March, 1783, "That the selectmen vendue [that is, farm out at auction] the poor of the town which are now supported by the town so that they may be supported in the cheapest manner;" no hospital, except the town pest-house on Grapevine Point, for the inoculation and treatment of small-pox, then so formidable; and no public library, though this is less a wonder, since it is also true of New Haven in 1884.

Turning to the classes which made up society, besides the professional men already mentioned, there were eight or nine lawyers in active practice; but the very recent growth of that profession in importance and public favor, and the losses it had suffered through loyalty to the British crown, are shown by the fact that the senior member of the bar was Charles Chauncey, only thirty-six years of age, while the leader of the profession in brilliancy was Pierpont Edwards, two years younger, whose annual income of \$2000 was said a little later to be the largest earned by any lawyer in the State.

The medical profession had also eight or nine representatives in what became the city,—the leading physician, alike in reputed skill and in social status, being Dr. Leverett Hubbard, President of the County Medical Society which was founded this same month, who lived in his new stone dwelling still standing at the junction of George and Meadow streets. Dr. John Spalding, after his removal here in the spring of 1784, was considered the leading surgeon.

As for the business of the city, there was the usual provision for domestic trading common to a place of this size. A statistical enumeration gives fifty-six shops, half a dozen of which carried from two to three thousand pounds (sterling) worth of goods, and the rest from £500 to £150 worth. What afterwards became the leading retail house of Broome & Platt was not removed here from New York till September, 1784;

Shipman, Drake, Howell, Perit, Helms, Austin, are among the other leading names. There were no local manufactures,—the long course of British rule had thoroughly stamped out everything of that sort; the utmost that was done was the ordinary spinning and weaving for domestic use, and a little ironworking and papermaking.

In one direction, however, there was activity. New Haven, in fulfillment of the dream of its founders and of all the early generations, was already of importance as a sea-port; it had in operation extensive oyster-fisheries; it had its Union Wharf and Long Wharf, though not so long as now; already, since the announcement of peace, vessels had begun to sail direct for England and Ireland, though the main stay was commerce with the West Indies, so far as they were open to us, in the export of horses, oxen, pork, beef, and lumber, with return cargoes of sugar and molasses. In 1784 thirty-six American vessels, with one British ship and one Danish, are recorded as entering this port, while thirty-three sea-going vessels were owned here, all engaged in foreign and West-India trade, as against forty that were owned just before the war began in 1775; at the close of warlike operations in 1781, this number had dwindled to one solitary vessel, so that the return of prosperity had been rapid in this branch; most of those now owned were built here or in the immediate neighborhood. There was at least one line of packets carrying both passengers and freight to New York weekly during the open season; and another weekly line running to New London and Norwich. The collector of customs for the United States Government was Jonathan Fitch, a son of Governor Fitch, of Norwalk, and a Yale graduate, who had married early a step-daughter of President Clap and had served for a generation before the war as steward of the college.

The central government was also represented by the post-

master, Elias Beers, whose office was next the store of his elder brother, Isaac Beers, on the College street side of the corner now occupied by the New Haven House. Post-riders took letters twice (or in severe weather, once) a week to New York, doing a large commission business, to the benefit of their own pockets, by the way. The return mails from New York divided at New Haven, one going each week *via* New London and Providence to Boston, the other taking the inland route to the same destination by Hartford and Springfield, and by each route there was a return mail weekly; the branching of the post-routes at this point into two eastward routes, as to this day of the railroads, is of course a reminder of the historical position of New Haven as the first settlement on the direct road between New York and Boston, and thus from the first the point to which all travel for New York from the eastward converged.

A stage for Hartford and Springfield left here every Wednesday; and another left on Saturday, which connected at Hartford with one leaving for Boston on Monday morning, which going by the most direct route (Somers, Brookfield, and Worcester) did not reach the journey's end until Thursday evening; the post-riders, however, moved more rapidly than this.

The New Haven post-office was the receiving-office for all the inland region not served by the Hartford, New York, and New London offices; thus, not only all letters for such near points as Cheshire, Wallingford, and Waterbury, but all for towns as far off as Litchfield and New Milford were left here, to be delivered to any one bound for those parts; if not soon called for, they were advertised in the New Haven newspaper, and after three months from that date, were sent to the Dead Letter department of the General post-office at Philadelphia, which was in charge of Ebenezer Hazard, Postmaster-General.

The post-office adjoined Isaac Beers's store; and this introduces us to what was, after the College, the intellectual center (in a sense) of New Haven. The store was a part of the proprietor's house, which was also an inn, and he sold—besides books—general groceries, and the best of gin and brandy. Of books he was, I think, one of the largest direct importers in the United States; and very remarkable are the lists of his latest acquisitions which he publishes now and then in the weekly newspaper, covering sometimes an entire page.

Besides this, there was at least one other general bookstore, of less pretensions, that of Daggett and Fitch; and one specially devoted to school-books, kept by Abel Morse, the teacher of a select school for girls; Goodrich and Darling, druggists, also dealt in books. The office of Thomas and Samuel Green, who printed the newspaper and such pamphlets as the divines and politicians of the neighborhood furnished for publication, was over Elias Shipman's store, which was directly opposite the post-office, on College and Chapel streets, the site of Townsend's Block; but they, I suppose, sold little but their own publications.

The newspaper was the Connecticut Journal, begun by the same publishers in 1767, and continuing under various proprietors until 1835. It appeared every Wednesday on a sheet of four pages, about fourteen by nine or ten inches in size, and was poorly edited, even for that day; so that we may not wonder that an early evidence of progress in the new city should have been the establishment, in May, 1784, of a second paper, the New Haven Gazette, price eight shillings a year, to edit which Josiah Meigs resigned his College tutorship.

In connection with the local publishing business may be mentioned the name of Abel Buell, the ingenious mechanic,—at various times in his life, engraver, type-founder, coiner, and goldsmith,—who advertises in March, 1784, a map of the

United States, the first ever compiled, engraved, and finished by one hand; and also the name of Amos Doolittle, the earliest copper-plate engraver in America, whose shop for sign-painting and the higher branches of his art was on the present College square, fronting the Green.

Passing to the political and social condition of the city, we are to remember that the whole country had just come out of an exhausting war; and New Haven had suffered her full share, much beyond the most of New England. A sermon just preached by the Rev. Benjamin Trumbull, of North Haven, at the celebration on the news of the Definitive Treaty of Peace, estimates the loss of New Haven in soldiers and seamen on the American side during the war at 210; and the loss of property by the raid of the British troops on this town was reckoned at over £30,800, in a depreciated currency.

But peace was now secured, and the general sentiment among the leaders of opinion in the town was hopeful of brighter days than ever; although the town taxes were fourpence on the pound, or nearly two cents on the dollar, double the usual rate before the war, and this high figure was supplemented moreover by state taxes of three shillings and twopence (sixteen cents on the dollar).

The fullest picture of our modern daily life is the newspaper; but for 1784 *The Connecticut Journal* is a poor help. It is guiltless of anything so direct as an editorial, and almost equally guiltless of contributions from correspondents; the local editor and the interviewer are alike unknown. In other words, the entire paper is made up of selections from other sheets, of foreign news (usually about ten weeks old), of very scanty items from New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and a few other prominent places, and of advertisements. The selections bear largely at this date on the novel situation of the United States, just formally acknowledged as independent. They

feed the popular interest in subjects which we know were under discussion elsewhere,—such as, preëminently, the approval or non-approval of the so-called Commutation Bill, recently passed by the Congress of the Confederation, for commuting the half-pay for life, previously voted to Revolutionary officers and soldiers, into five years' full pay in one gross sum; the change was really a shrewd piece of economy for the government, and yet was most unpopular, especially in New England; a convention met at Middletown, in December, 1783, to record Connecticut's dissent from such a creation of a moneyed aristocracy.

Another timely subject, of far-reaching consequences, was the question of giving Congress the right to levy moderate import duties on specified articles, for meeting the interest on the public debt; the principle of Federal government was involved; approval of the impost meant adhesion to the theory of a strong central government as necessary, while disapproval was a preference for the existing Confederation, already on its downward career to powerlessness and contempt.

In these twin disputes, the Connecticut Legislature committed itself to the policy of narrowness and conservatism by resolving in 1783 that the requisitions of Congress were not valid until after the approval of the State; and in January, 1784, they voted down (69 to 37) the impost recommended by Congress, the New Haven representative voting with the majority. At the next election, however, the people repudiated the action of their deputies; and Pierpont Edwards and James Hillhouse, of New Haven, concurred with the great majority of the new General Assembly in granting Congress the desired authority to raise this slender revenue.

The current advertisements show the great confusion of the time in respect to financial standards. Goods are on sale for cash, for bank notes, for Morris's notes, Mr. Hillegas' notes,

Pickering's certificates, soldiers' notes, State money, all kinds of lumber, grain, oxen, cows, potash, country produce, etc., etc. Bank notes were the issues of the bank at Philadelphia, the only institution of the kind in the Union; Morris's notes were the issues of treasury-notes by Robert Morris, superintendent of finance of the United States; Hillegas was the treasurer of Congress, and Pickering was Quartermaster-General; soldiers' notes were the interest-bearing certificates entitling the army to their half-pay for life, or to full pay for five years; and State money meant the outstanding bills of credit or paper money issued in the early years of the war by the State government, at convenient denominations, from two pence to two pounds. By cash was meant at that date, before Gouverneur Morris's system of decimal currency (which we now use) had been adopted by Congress, and a mint set up, a miscellaneous foreign coinage, mainly English and Spanish; with a few coppers of local origin; it was through familiarity with the Spanish currency, that the term dollar was already in general use.

Socially, the characteristics of New Haven were much the same as throughout New England. The population was still of pure English descent, and a homely familiarity of intercourse prevailed; while the adventuring spirit of commercial life, traversing the seas, tended to widen views, and the presence of the College was felt as a cultivating influence, bringing hither a constant succession of intelligent and famous visitors. The specially cold winter of 1783-4 was not a favorable season for travel, but President Stiles's diary records the entertainment, among others, of Major General John Sullivan, of New Hampshire, of Mr. Gay, a son of the poet, of Ira Allen, a brother of Ethan Allen, and one of the founders of Vermont, and of John Ledyard, the distinguished traveler.

I have not time to dwell on details of the social life of a

century ago : if it was not the hurried and feverish life of the present, no more was it the ascetic and constrained life of a century earlier ; there was abundance of gaiety of a simple sort ; and the shopkeepers publish prompt advertisements of the arrival of fresh invoices of "gentlemen and ladies' dancing-gloves for the City Assembly," of "chip-hats of the newest taste," of "new figured, fashionable cotton chintz and calicoes, proper for ladies' winter dress," of "elegant figured shauls," of "ladies' tiffany balloon hats," and so on *ad infinitum*,—showing that human nature had the same kind of interest then as now.

As one part of their social life, we must remember this as the time when domestic slavery was general in New Haven. The importing of slaves was forbidden since 1774, but the papers have occasional, not frequent advertisements for the sale of likely negroes, or it may be a family of negroes, in respect to whom "a good title will be given ;" sometimes it is for a term of years (perhaps till the attainment of legal majority, when by the will of some former owner freedom was to be given), and sometimes it is noted that, in the lack of ready money, rum and sugar will be taken in part payment. The relations of masters and slaves were in most cases here the best possible ; yet sensible men were uneasy under the inconsistency of the system, and President Stiles writes in his diary, in December, 1783 : "The constant annual importation of negroes into America and the West Indies is supposed to have been of late years about 60,000. Is it possible to think of this without horror ?"

I pass on to the special circumstances which made New Haven a city.

The origin of the movement it may be difficult to trace. Certainly we cannot adopt the earliest date that has been assigned for such an origin ; for that would commit us to the

acceptance of a statement by the notoriously inaccurate Samuel Peters, who in giving in his *History of Connecticut* (1781) the story of the Phantom Ship, which sailed from this port in 1647, says that she carried a request for a patent for the colony and for a charter for the city of New Haven; this part of his tale is a pure fabrication.

The first step which I can fix in the genealogy of the charter is a vote in town-meeting, December 9, 1771, in these words: "Whereas a motion was made to the town that this town might have the privileges of a city, and that proper measures might be taken to obtain the same, it is thereupon Voted that Roger Sherman" [and seventeen others] "be a Committee to take the same into consideration and judge of the motion what is best for the town to do with regard to the same and report thereupon to the town at another town-meeting." This committee never reported, so far as the records show, nor do the public prints of the day refer to the matter. Roger Sherman, the chairman, then fifty years old, and for ten years a resident of New Haven, was already eminent in the regards of his fellow-townsmen, a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and a member of the Governor's Council, or Upper House of the Assembly, though still keeping a small country-store opposite the College on Chapel street.

Ten years passed without further sign, until in December, 1781, the town was obliged to take cognizance of efforts which had lately been gathering strength, for the creation of new towns from the more distant parts of New Haven. At a town-meeting of this date, a committee was therefore appointed to report a plan for the division of the town into several distinct townships; and this committee reported the same month in favor of setting off the portions which afterwards became Woodbridge, East Haven, and North Haven. These towns were not in fact incorporated until after the city of

New Haven ; but the one movement was a complement of the other.

At the close of the Revolution the two most prosperous centers of population in this country were Philadelphia, with nearly 30,000 inhabitants, and New York, with a little under 25,000. Both were cities : New York having received a charter from James II. in 1686, during the spasm of liberal zeal which marked the beginning of his reign ; and Philadelphia having been similarly endowed in 1701 by the proprietor of Pennsylvania, the ardent friend and quondam political mentor of James II. Besides these, I do not recall any other incorporated cities in the Union at this date, except Albany, which was chartered at the same time and under the same circumstances as New York, but was now of less population than New Haven, and Richmond, incorporated in 1782, but only a small village in point of numbers.

The prosperity and size of Philadelphia and New York were, however, objects of emulation ; and there is some evidence that it was from an ambition of rivaling their prominence, that a charter was desired for New Haven. This may have been especially in view of the long occupation of New York by the British, and a consequent interruption of the previous dependence of our dealers on New York merchants for imports from England and for the return of remittances thither ; New York had just been evacuated, and might not the two places begin new careers more on an equality, if New Haven were elevated to the dignity of a city ?

To recur to President Stiles's diary, we have this entry on October 20, 1783 : "Sign'd a petition to the Assembly for incorporating New Haven as a city." The Assembly was then holding its regular fall session in New Haven, and so continued until November 1, when it adjourned to meet again in January in a special session, for the purpose of revising the laws of

the State. The October session was made memorable by the announcement of Governor Trumbull's determination to retire from public life at the next election, on account of his advanced age (73).

The petition referred to by Dr. Stiles is on file (with 214 signatures) in the State Library. It bases the desired action on the hindrances to an extension of commerce, which "arise for want of a due regulation of the internal police" of the town. Specifically, "it is matter of no small importance that wharves, streets and highways, be commodious for business, and kept continually in good repair;" and such a result cannot be attained, unless the memorialists have a jurisdiction of their own. Hence the petition, that the inhabitants within specified limits "be made a corporation," with power to enact by-laws, and that a Court be constituted for the same jurisdiction. A bill brought in in accordance with this petition was passed at the same session by the Upper House; but the Lower House insisted that it be referred to the adjourned session for their consideration, and it was so referred.

On the 21st of November, Dr. Stiles writes: "Examining the Act or Charter proposed for the City of New Haven." This interval of examination resulted in making the final draft of the charter quite different in details from that presented in October.

The Assembly was to meet in New Haven on Thursday, January 8, 1784; and on Monday, January 5, at a town-meeting, with Roger Sherman in the chair, a resolution was passed, "requesting the representatives in the Assembly," who were Captain Henry Daggett and Captain Jesse Ford, "to exert themselves that the Act for incorporating a part of the town be passed with all convenient speed."

Owing to unusually bad traveling, the adjourned session did not open until Tuesday, January 13. The presiding officer

of the Upper House was His Excellency Governor Jonathan Trumbull, of Lebanon, who, as was his custom, lodged at the house of President Stiles; while the Speaker of the Lower House was the Hon. Colonel William Williams, also of Lebanon, well known as a signer of the Declaration of 1776.

As usual, all Acts passed by the Assembly are dated as of the first day of the session, and as usual the weekly newspapers give none of the interesting details of legislative proceedings; so that it is only from the unprinted pages of Dr. Stiles's Literary Diary that we gain the exact knowledge of the day when the charter was finally passed.

The next week's Connecticut Journal, however, contains the notification of the first meeting of the city, to be held on February 10; and in the Journal of February 4 appears an advertisement by the selectmen of the town, announcing that, in accordance with a paragraph in the act of incorporation of the city, an opportunity will be given on Thursday, February 5, for any who are qualified to become freemen of the State, but have not yet taken the freeman's oath, to appear and be admitted, so as to participate in the first city election.

On the day appointed, Dr. Stiles was among those taking the oath; and he records that the total number in the city who are qualified to become freemen, as now certified by the selectmen, is three hundred and forty-three, of whom fifty-five (about one-sixth) are college graduates; eighty-two of the three hundred and forty-three (about one-fourth) have not taken the freeman's oath,—some being absent, some disabled, some indifferent. The full list, which he appends, is of great interest, and might instructively be compared, on the one hand, with the roll of original planters, in 1640, and on the other hand with the roll of our voters to-day. In 1784 the families most largely represented in the voting population were, Austin (a name introduced in the generation after the settlement, not

among the first-comers) and Trowbridge, the name which has multiplied beyond any other in the original company; next followed Atwater, Bishop, Hotchkiss, Munson, Bradley, Mix, Thompson, and Townsend.

Dr. Stiles further judges that there were about six hundred adult males living within the city limits, showing that nearly every other man was disfranchised, either by the operation of the qualification limiting suffrage to those holding real estate which would yield a rental of £2 *per annum*, or personal estate worth £40, or else disfranchised by their loyalty to Great Britain in the late war.

The election of city officers was appointed for February 10; and as the General Assembly was still in session, the third story of the State House was the place of meeting. Of the 261 freemen who had qualified, over 250, says Dr. Stiles, attended at the opening of the polls, but only 249 votes were recorded on the first ballot, that for mayor; of these just the number necessary for a choice, 125, were cast for Roger Sherman, 102 for Deacon Thomas Howell, and 22 for Thomas Darling.

Mr. Sherman was now in his 63d year, and was unquestionably the most distinguished resident of the new city. That he did not carry a larger vote may have been due to his personal characteristics; that aristocratic, chilling reserve of manner which his juniors have reported of him, may well have stood in the way of popularity. Moreover, there were undercurrents of feeling, as we shall see, that would have prevented a cordial uniting on any one. It is an evidence of Mr. Sherman's acknowledged merits that at the time of this election he was absent, in Annapolis, where he had been for a month in attendance as a member of Congress, which had migrated southwards, pending the expected establishment of a capital near the falls of the Potomac.

Sherman's chief competitor for the mayoralty, Deacon Howell of the First Church, now in his 65th year, was chosen Senior Alderman, and thus in the Mayor's absence became the active head of the government; it is remarkable that neither of the two was of old New Haven stock, Sherman being a native of Massachusetts, and Howell's father having immigrated from Long Island.

The other aldermen were Samuel Bishop, previously identified with the town-clerk's office for forty years, and brought into wide notoriety at the end of his long life as President Jefferson's appointee to the collectorship of the port; Deacon David Austin, of the White Haven Church; and Isaac Beers, the bookseller. The interest in the election of twenty common councilmen, which was not completed till the third day, dwindled so rapidly that the total number of votes for the last places was only about one hundred. At the conclusion of the election (February 12) all the new officials except the absent mayor were sworn in, and the city government was finally organized.

Dr. Stiles's valuable diary gives an inside view of the election, under date of February 13, when he says: "The city politics are founded in an endeavor silently to bring Tories into an equality and supremacy among the Whigs. The Episcopalians are all Tories but two, and all qualified on this occasion, though despising Congress government before; they may perhaps be forty voters. There may be twenty or thirty of Mr. Whittelsey's meeting added to these. Perhaps one-third of the citizens," that is, I suppose, one-third of the 261 who had taken the freeman's oath, "may be hearty Tories, one-third Whigs, and one-third indifferent. Mixing all up together, the election has come out, Mayor and two Aldermen, Whigs; two Aldermen, Tories. Of the Common Council, five Whigs, five flexibles but in heart Whigs, eight Tories.

The two Sheriffs," Elias Stilwell and Parsons Clark, "and Treasurer," Hezekiah Sabin, "Whigs; the first Sheriff firm, the other flexible."

From these hints it would appear that the so-called "Tory" element had been concerned in the entire movement for a charter. I may add that at a meeting held on March 8, on the motion of Pierpont Edwards, a committee of eight was appointed, "to consider of the propriety and expediency of admitting as inhabitants of this town persons who in the course of the late war have adhered to the cause of Great Britain against these United States, and are of fair characters, and will be good and useful members of society and faithful citizens of this State." In their report, made the same day, this committee deduced from the independence of the several States and the spirit of peace and philanthropy displayed in the "Recommendations" of Congress based on the treaty of peace, that it was in point of law proper to admit such as are above described, but not any who were guilty of unauthorized plundering and murder. As for expediency, they suggested that no nation is truly great unless it is also distinguished for justice and magnanimity; and argued that it would be magnanimous to restore these persons, and especially that the commercial future of New Haven made it desirable thus to increase its inhabitants. The report was at once accepted and approved by the town. Such an ardent patriot as Dr. Stiles dismisses the unpalatable theme with this curt entry in his diary: "This day town-meeting voted to re-admit the Tories."

The question of the treatment of the loyalists had for months previous been under heated discussion all over the Union; and not least in New Haven, where the argument was strongly urged that a sound commercial policy dictated the invitation hither of some of the numerous gentlemen of large

property and influential connections in business, who had been dislodged from their homes and would gladly begin life anew among a congenial people. Attempts had been made to mould public opinion by newspaper appeals ; and twice or thrice with special ingenuity by printing extracts from letters said to have been received from friends in Europe ; one such, for instance, in the *Journal* of January 7, represented that Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay, now abroad for the negotiation of peace, were much hurt at the harsh measures adopted toward loyalists. By such means and by more direct arguments, the way was quietly prepared for a popular amnesty, which was thus voted in March, 1784, just a year after a former town-meeting, when the New Haven representatives were solemnly instructed by their constituents "to use their influence with the next General Assembly in an especial manner, to prevent the return of any of those miscreants who have deserted their country's cause and joined the enemies of this and the United States of America, during their late contest :"—a striking instance of rapid conversion.

I add before closing a reference to two peculiar provisions of the charter. It was enacted that the mayor's tenure of office should be "during the pleasure of the General Assembly," which was equivalent to a life appointment, and so proved in practice ; for Mayor Sherman retained the position until his death in 1793, when Samuel Bishop succeeded, continuing till his death in 1803 ; the third incumbent, Elizur Goodrich, held office till his resignation in 1822, and his successor, George Hoadly, till his resignation in 1826, when by vote of the city a request was preferred to the Assembly, which resulted in the substitution of an annual election.

Another provision of the charter which needs comment is the proclamation that power is conferred on the city to exchange the upper part of the Green, west of the line of the

churches, for other land, for highways, or another green elsewhere. I do not know that any exchange was ever proposed or attempted; but the insertion in the charter of express authority for the purpose, was perhaps meant to intimate that the city had the State government at its back in asserting authority over the public green, as against the claims preferred by the "Proprietors of Common and Undivided Lands in New Haven."*

The city government thus organized was immediately put into operation. The example was contagious; New London asked for and received a city charter at the same session of the legislature, and Hartford, Norwich, and Middletown, at the succeeding one. It was the era of upbuilding and of preparation,—they hardly knew for what; yet we may doubt if in their proudest dreams the citizens of 1784 anticipated the growth which has come to pass. Certainly we know that public sentiment had been incredulous, when Dr. Stiles in the last election sermon had announced it "probable that within a century from our independence the sun will shine on fifty millions of inhabitants in the United States." But the century has gone by; and the prophecy has very little exceeded the truth. We can at least learn the lesson, not to underrate the progress which is possible in the century to come, knowing that the present is as full of fruit and of promise as the past, and that the resistless tide of time which sweeps down individuals and generations in its "ceaseless current," only enlarges and deepens the hold of institutions which subserve useful ends and are wisely and justly administered.

* As an instance of these claims it may be mentioned that the location of the Fair Haven meeting-house (represented at present by the United Church) on the Green in 1770 was by a vote of the "Proprietors."

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